

Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Partners

What is the Veterans Choice Program?

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a program to improve Veterans' access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA. Section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACCA) required that VA establish the program. In late 2014, VA began mailing all Veterans a Veterans Choice Card. The Choice Card allows Veterans to choose to receive care outside of VA when they qualify for the new program. The Choice Card doesn't replace the identification card Veterans already use to access other VA benefits.

Who is eligible for the program?

A Veteran must be enrolled in the VA health care system and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care:
 - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran's provider determines he/she needs to be seen; or
 - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his/her provider.
- The Veteran's current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- The Veteran needs to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home.
- The Veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons.
- The Veteran's specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons.
- The Veteran resides in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and resides more than 20 miles from such a VA facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC.

How can I keep up to date with the latest updates about the Choice Program?

The Choice Act website is the central resource for the latest updates about the program. There you will find the latest fact sheets, frequently asked questions and be able to "live chat" with a VA representative about the Veterans Choice Program. The Choice Act website can be found by visiting, visit www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Each VA medical facility has a designated "Choice Champion" who has received specific training on the Choice Program and can answer questions.

What should I tell Veterans who have questions about their eligibility?

- Veterans can call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 for more information, to verify eligibility.
- Veterans can also visit www.va.gov/opa/choiceact for more information about the program.

If I have a question about a specific Veteran, what do I do?

Direct the Veteran to call the Choice Program Call Center, visit www.va.gov/opa/choiceact to live chat with a representative, or contact the Choice Champion at their local VA medical facility."